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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"*****"

Well, it's certainly fall here in New England. The leaves are close to peak color and I'm sure the leaf-peepers will be out in full force this weekend. Me, I'll likely be out in the yard getting a jump on cleaning the leaves up! It's a nice time of year, and the temperatures are nice - not hot or cold.

I don't have much to say in this editorial this week, but I will say that further on in this issue, I had a lot more to say pertaining to my editorial a couple of weeks ago. As I mentioned last week, we did receive some feedback to that editorial and I did respond. And, other than the events affecting us here and abroad, it's been difficult to focus on much else regardless of how much we try and go on with "normalcy" in our lives.

So let's get on with this week's issue as we have a lot of interesting stuff included this week.

Until next time...

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Atari International Group Formed

Atari community goes international with new organization to promote Atari computers

October 4, 2001 -- A group of users and programmers from around the world have collected their skills and resources to create Atari International, a global, Internet based organization dedicated to supporting the users and developers of Atari hardware and software, as well as to promote the platform.

The new organization seeks to show the world that its perception of the Atari as "The bygone days of" or as "outdated" or "retro", is a misconception. Thousands of people across the globe regularly use Atari machines, emulators, or modernized clones for everyday computer uses, and

even some business ones. They see that, while most of the hardware may be outdated by today's specifications, Atari machines were built so well, and the programs written so efficiently, that you don't need today's super-powerful machines to get the same work done.

Atari International (A.I.) exists to serve several needs. One is that existing Atari users are frequently at a loss when it came to getting answers, parts, or programs for their Atari computers or game systems. Another is that computer companies like Milan Computers and Medusa do not make it easy for people outside their respective countries (Germany and Switzerland) to obtain their Atari related products, which is of concern to Atari users everywhere since these companies make the most advanced Atari-clone computers available today.

The third need, and possibly the most important, is Atari's public image. Most people see the Atari world as being nothing more than some fond memories of Pac Man or Pong. In truth, not only do people use these computers for modern uses (Internet, business, etc), but that there are also companies (like the ones previously mentioned) that are continuing to develop the Atari architecture and operating systems, or clones thereof. The members of A.I. believe that with sufficient support, these companies could produce exceptional machines that could satisfy most if not all the needs of most home computer users, and many business ones as well.

A.I. seeks to perform many tasks to these ends. They will provide informative articles directed at the common computer user telling them about the current state of Atari computer systems, what they are capable of, and how to get them. There will be information connecting existing Atari users to the resources they require to use and update their systems. Also, dialogues will be established with Atari related companies (including the current owner of the Atari name, Infogrames), encouraging them to continue to develop and support their products, and to broaden their marketing to outside their native countries, if that appears to be a problem with them. There will also be workshops and tutorials for those wishing to learn how use Atari computers, or even program for them.

The primary contact point for Atari International is their web page:
www.atari-international.org

They can be reached via e-mail at ai@atari-international.org.

"Atari International is a non-profit organization working to educate the public about the Atari platform as a feasible alternative for many computer needs, as well as be a resource for those interested in acquiring Atari hardware, software, and support."

<http://www.atari-international.org>

AI Needs A New Name

After receiving an email from infogrames, the AI organization needs to change their name. So if you want to suggest one (that doesn't make use of the word Atari), go to the AI (now called NONAME) site.

<http://atari-users.net/atariinternational/>

ST/Falcon Scene Genealogy

This website tries to gather information about crews working on the ST/Falcon since 1987.

<http://www.st.scene.free.fr>

MegaPOV v.0.7 and Eureka rev.1.10

As you probably know, my homepage contains POV 3.1g and Eureka. I generally compile latest version of POV, and Eureka is my own software, a 2D Graph Describer and 3D Modeller.

A few days ago, POV 3.5 was binary released, so there's no source for the moment. We can't play with it on ATARI platforms, it's beta ... But the main improvement was that a big extension called MegaPOV was included in the source of POV 3.1g.

POV 3.1g + MegaPOV 0.7 is nearly POV 3.5. Well, almost. But waiting for 3.5, it's possible to play with MegaPOV. You will find it on my page, coming with the latest release of my Eureka software. This software export POV, VRML (this is interactive), 3D2, EB_Model etc ... I strongly recommend both to you, if you are interested by image synthesis.

Have great fun,

Regards,

-- Francois LE COAT

<http://eureka.atari.org>
<mailto:lecoat@atari.org>

cc65 v2.7.0 Released

I'm proud to announce version 2.7.0 of CC65, a C cross-compiler / cross-assembler combo for 6502 systems.

CC65 has C and runtime library support for many of the old 6502 machines, including

- The Commodore C64, C128 and the C16, C116, Plus/4 machines.
- The CBM 510 (aka P500), a quite rare Commodore machine (programs run in bank 0).
- The CBM 600/700 family (programs run in bank 1).
- Newer PET machines (not 2001)
- The Apple][(library support by Kevin Ruland <kevin@rodin.wustl.edu>)
- The Atari 8 bit machines (thanks to the Atari team: Christian Groessler <cpg@aladdin.de>, Mark Keates <markk@dendrite.co.uk>, Freddy Offenga <taf_offenga@yahoo.com> and David Lloyd, <dmlloyd@atari-central.com>).
- GEOS for the C64 and C128 (GEOSLib by Maciej Witkowiak <ytm@elysium.pl>)

The libraries are fairly portable, so creating a version for other 6502s shouldn't be too much work.

Version 2.7 has a real lot of changes, including a completely rewritten backend. Here is a short list:

- New compiler option `--create-dep` to create a dependency list for a makefile.
- Option and pragma to generate stack overflow checks (both, parameter and CPU stack).
- Transparent and efficient handling of fixed params in variadic functions.
- Build parameter frames when calling other functions by adjusting the stack once and then storing into this frame instead of pushing each parameter separately.
- More flexible `.INCBIN` command for the assembler.
- Compiler generates line info for the assembler. The assembler passes this to the linker, which is able to generate files containing this information.
- New, much improved compiler backend.
- The literal pool works now without a hardcoded limit.
- C functions may now be declared as `__fastcall__`.
- New `#elif` preprocessor directive
- Boolean `and` and `or` in preprocessor `#if` clauses does now work.
- New, improved `__asm__` syntax for the inline assembler.
- New code generation for the switch statement.
- Optimizations. Please note that some of the optimizations of the old backend are no longer there, so in rare cases, code may be slower when compiled with this version.
- Symbols may now be defined in the linker config file. This is used for most platforms to define the size of the stack.
- Updated the `cc65` utility with all the new command line switches.
- C64 startup code no longer uses fixed stack top.
- Several changed/added runtime functions for better performance.
- CBM BASIC compatible file I/O functions by Marc Rintsch.
- Support for the Commodore 510.
- Mouse routines completed! Mouse support is available for the following systems: Atari, C64, C128, CBM 510 and GEOS.

- Command line response files are now supported to aid those people working with "operating systems" that have a serious command line length limit.
- A new plasma graphics demo written in pure C (by groepaz/hitmen).
- And lots of other minor changes...

There is still no support for the following features:

- * Floats and bit fields.
- * studio file routines on most systems. The 8 bit Ataris are the first machines that do have full file I/O support. Please note that the complete CBM family doesn't have studio file support!
- * The 80 column mode on the C128 is not supported by the conio library.

Available packages:

As usual I will provide the complete sources and several binary packages, including RPMs for RedHat Linux. Linux is the primary development platform, so the sources do compile out of the box on Linux machines.

Please note that there are now separate RPMs for the compiler proper and the target specific libraries. To develop for one of the predefined target systems you need the compiler RPM package **and** one of the target machine packages.

Binaries for DOS and and Windows will follow or may already be available at the time you read this. OS/2 packages will again be available, but since there are almost no downloads for OS/2, so the host platform may get dropped in the near future (again). As with the RPM packages, you need the package for the development system (Windows, etc.) **and** one of the target machine packages.

Download:

More information information and a download link, please visit the cc65 web page at

<http://www.cc65.org/>

Thanks to all who sent feedback and suggestions and of course to anyone who helped developing cc65!

--

Ullrich von Bassewitz

uz@musoftware.de

New German Site for the XL/XE-Series

A new Site is born!

The aim is to have almost all information of programming the XL/XE and have a contact list to all active users.

Of course there is a download area and we will have tips & tricks for

<http://www.xl-project.de>

The Atari Phoenix Project EZine

Available for an early preview is a "sampler edition" of the upcoming EZine which will feature articles dealing exclusively with the Atari 8-bit line of microcomputers. The full issue is tentatively slated for online release on November 10, 2001, so if you have suggestions or critique or know something you would like to see incorporated, there is still enough time to contact me. Adobe Reader (free from <http://www.adobe.com>) is needed to view the sampler edition. You can find the EZine here:

<http://atariphoenix.com>

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->A-ONE Feedback! - A-ONE Readers' Opinion Forum!
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[Editor's note: A couple of weeks ago, my editorial included comments praising a recent decision by the San Francisco libraries to risk losing federal funding by eliminating filters on library computers. These filters were designed and used to help keep pornography from being viewed by children. You may read those comments in their entirety in A-ONE issue number 03-40. I received a few letters regarding that editorial, but only two - both from David Ormand - really addressed the issue. Here are David's letters - I'll make some additional comments afterward.]

Reader response to A-ONE editorial

I must respond to your editorial in the latest AONE, in which you applaud the City of San Francisco for banning filters on public library internet computers.

First, I quite agree with the statement of fact that filters are an imperfect solution to the problem. Parents or officials who install a browser filter and walk away thinking the job's done are fooling themselves. Or course, you might expect this of most government officials.

Second, I agree that parents need to monitor their children's use of the internet. Parents are certainly responsible for their children's development and actions. Of course, anyone who thinks parents have complete control over their children at all times and all circumstances is in the same class of people as those who think browser filters solve

the problem.

Third, I agree that parents, schools, and society in general need to reinforce values including why pornography is harmful. However, in our society as it is right now, particularly when the supreme values are "tolerance" and "free speech", I think it is unrealistic to hope that schools, libraries, and local governments will reinforce anti-pornography values while at the same time banning anti-pornography internet filters.

However, I want you to understand that the issue of "children's access to internet pornography" is only part of the question, and merely the most simplistic and easily attacked part of the question. After having my ears filled with the cries against filtering - cries made by the American Library Association and various civil liberties organizations - I was pretty much of the same mind as you. Then I read a magazine article about the librarians themselves, who nominally fall behind the lead of the ALA, but found themselves coming into sharp disagreement over this very issue. The problem they face is NOT children surfing harmful sites by themselves, but rather adult male pornography addicts. These guys use the internet computers in the public library exclusively for their habit. They leave the images up on the screen when they are finished. They print out images and leave them laying about. They entice children to look at the images. They stand in front of the screens and masturbate. They make lewd and suggestive remarks to the librarians, or become threatening or violent when their time on the computer is up and are asked to leave. The librarians should not be forced to work in such an environment; they are public library employees, not workers in an adult entertainment shop. The general public, adults and children alike, should be able to enjoy a public library, not be discouraged from visiting an adult entertainment shop.

The government, particularly state and city governments who fund and operate the public libraries, have a responsibility to protect their own employees and their citizens from both pornography and those addicted to pornography. This is not a censorship issue; nothing is preventing these guys from getting their own computers at home to feed their habit. The real question is, should public libraries be required to provide access to pornography? I think not. And, granted that filters are not perfect, and that they also block useful sites along with the harmful ones, if they discourage the porn addicts from doing their thing at public libraries, filters will do until something better comes along. Sure seems better than some alternatives, such as taking the computers out altogether, or paying police officers to hang about in libraries to control the porn addicts as they enjoy their right to unfettered access to everything and anything.

While we're making suggestions, how about leaving the cruddy filters on, get our evil government money, and let the people doing legitimate research inform the librarian when they get blocked. The librarian can then disable the filter for the duration of the patron's visit, maybe even assist with the research. Or, since you bring up special library cards (presumably magnetic cards which can be swiped on the computer to permit access), let's up the technology to disabling the filter automatically for these specially qualified children accompanied by their parents with a certified need to do research on breast cancer.

Re: Filtering Editorial

Hi, Dana,

The letter I sent you just a bit ago was my letter to you the editor. I've responded to your promptings for letters before, and pretty much got raked, because my perspective is very different than yours. Well, I can accept that, because you're the editor, and I can choose to cancel my subscription or continue to put up with your editorials. I choose the latter, because I love the mag! Keep up the good work! I don't care that much about all the game console news, but I really appreciate the notices of new developments, the excerpts from c.s.a.s. traffic (often I find the edited version to be more useful than the raw traffic), and the news articles, particularly the saga of Microsoft vs. DOJ and the latest bit about the anti-terrorism legislation. Just to say so, I (along with many others) don't care that much about Carnivore; I am much more concerned about attempts by the government to enforce a "back-door" to personal encryption technologies. I didn't see any of that explicitly in the articles in the last A-ONE; please keep us notified of developments in this area so Atarians can call/write/email their representatives at opportune times.

As a journalist, you might be interested in the source article I mentioned in my letter. This came from World Magazine, which is (so I understand) an up-and-coming competitor to the likes of Newsweek and USN&WR that approaches the subject from a Christian point of view. That may not thrill you, but perhaps you can read the attached article from a professional point of view and judge it on its own merits. Whether or not San Francisco did the right thing or internet filters are good or bad is mostly a matter of opinion. The articles in World, however, bring news (factual?) topics to the table that are often omitted or ignored by the mainstream media.

Regards,
David Ormand

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World Magazine (www.worldmag.com)
ARCHIVE FROM:
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Number 23

Faltering over filtering

Public libraries' resistance to Internet filtering
to screen out pornography draws a seedy new
clientele and drives away good librarians.
Now, they're fighting back

By Lynn Vincent

Warning: Contains graphic material

Heidi Borton loved being a librarian. She enjoyed helping patrons at the Seattle-area Woodinville Public Library pursue knowledge, and found it satisfying to create a safe, enriching haven for visiting children. But when the Internet exploded onto the information science scene, a new kind of library offering - pornography - radically changed her job.

As King County's flagship technical library, Woodinville adopted Web access in 1996. Immediately, Ms. Borton said, the library's clientele changed as a steady stream of new patrons - mostly male adults but also teens and young children - began regularly using the library's computers to access hard-core sex sites. Woodinville staffers soon were forced to take on new duties: closing out computer screens left open to scenes of orgies and child sex, calming porn-addicted patrons who raged when all the unfiltered computer terminals were in use, and fielding questions from children about how to view pornography in the library. Ms. Borton watched her once-peaceful library transformed into a tax-funded peep show - and into a hostile and degrading work environment.

Woodinville wasn't the only library so changed. Library workers in all 50 states have complained without effect to the American Library Association (ALA) about hostile work conditions fostered by the group's endorsement of unfiltered Web access in public libraries. But a May finding by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) may represent a ray of hope for Ms. Borton and others hoping to recapture the nation's libraries from patrons surfing for porn.

Last month, the EEOC announced a finding of "probable cause" that 12 Minneapolis librarians were subjected to a sexually hostile work environment in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 when they were exposed to pornography on the Internet. The librarians, employees of the Minneapolis Central Library, filed their complaint with the EEOC in April, citing hard-core pornographic websites left visible on vacated terminals, explicit printouts left on tables, and children captivated by Internet porn.

In view of the EEOC's finding, the complainants now will barter a new workplace policy with Minneapolis library officials. But if negotiations fall flat, the U.S. Justice Department may file suit against the city's library system, according to the librarians' attorney Bob Halagan.

The ALA, a 58,000-member trade organization that exerts tremendous influence over library policies, opposed the Minneapolis librarians - and others with similar complaints. According to Ms. Borton, who resigned from the Woodinville library and now speaks publicly against library-based Web porn, librarians who grumble about ALA policy are labeled "censors" - an epithet akin to "Nazi" among librarians - and blackballed by administrators who toe the ALA line. The ALA's official policy on access to electronic materials is that libraries "must support access to information on all subjects that serve the needs or interests of each user, regardless of the user's age or the content of the material." Thus, while nearly three-quarters of public libraries offer Internet access, only about 15 percent use some type of blocking technology on at least some public workstations. To keep it that way, the ALA has joined with the American Civil Liberties Union and other "free-speech" activists in opposing any legislative attempts to block or filter Internet porn.

How big is the impact on libraries and library workers of free access to Internet porn? A study last year by Oregon librarian David Burt of less than one-third of American public libraries revealed 2,062 documented incidents of porn-viewing and related problems. Using Freedom of Information Act requests to obtain written reports from libraries, Mr. Burt cataloged hundreds of complaints from librarians. One in Ft. Vancouver, Wash., reported a pattern of Internet use by two brothers, followed by library workers' repeated discovery of semen on the library's restroom floor. Many library staffers reported enduring the sight of men and children fondling themselves. Other reports included 106 incidents of adults deliberately exposing children to pornography, five incidents of attempted child molestation, and 25 occasions on which patrons harassed library staff with sexually explicit material. In almost all cases, librarians reported that they were powerless to stop such behavior because of local library policies that conformed to those of the ALA.

The EEOC decision may help change that. The Family Research Council hailed the finding as a crucial counterpoint to previous judicial rulings, which have held that filtering graphic sex sites violates pornographers' First Amendment rights. In finding "probable cause" for the Minneapolis librarians, the EEOC acknowledged that people who don't want to be exposed to pornography have rights, too - despite the free-speech activism of the ALA. Notes Jan LaRue, the Family Research Council's senior director of legal studies, "The ALA has resisted doing what's constitutional and common sense: Don't bring into the library through cyberspace what would never be stocked on the bookshelves."

Meanwhile the battle for common sense continues. In December, Congress passed the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), which denies federal funding to public libraries and schools that fail to install filtering software on computer terminals purchased with federal money. In March, the ALA filed suit to block enforcement of the new law, explaining, "Librarians care deeply about children."

A-ONE Editor's Response!

David,

I always enjoy receiving feedback to articles contained within A-ONE, as well as responses to our editorial comments. Readers are always welcomed to respond whether they agree or not. I'm sorry if you felt "raked" by some comments I made in response to one of your earlier letters. I assure you that that was not my intent. There are topics that will certainly get me in a "feisty" mood when I strongly disagree! <grin>

Firstly, I appreciate your comments pertaining to A-ONE. Our goal has always been to keep our readers informed about what is happening in the Atari scene, as well as the rest of the computing world. Your comments

provide feedback that tells us that we are providing the type of service that we set out to accomplish.

Second, I think that we're in agreement that filters on library computers, as a mechanism to deter children from viewing pornography, are not the solution. However, I'm not sure how you feel about how federal funding being used as leverage for filtering use plays into the scheme of things.

Third, your letters and subsequent supporting article brings up a point that I didn't mention in my editorial nor was it something that I even considered. And that deals with adults using these computers to feed their pornography habit. And, how that use affects library workers.

The only comment that you made, and it wasn't necessarily your opinion, that didn't "thrill" me was in reference to the magazine article: "This came from World Magazine, which ... approaches the subject from a Christian point of view." In my opinion, this is not a religious issue and I resent a magazine making it one, if that is their stance. I believe that this is a cultural issue, as well as one of morality; it's one dealing with choices and personal rights. I believe that government and religion should stay out of it other than to protect the legal rights of all involved.

However, you make some valid points and they are supported by that article. What about the rights of library workers? What rights do they have in protecting themselves from being in a "hostile work environment"? Being in a management position, I understand the significance of such an issue.

While the article described that there were over two thousand documented cases of problems, how does that equate to the total number of computer use? In essence, how large, or small, is this issue? The article doesn't give us the whole picture, not that I'm surprised. Any statistic can be manipulated to prove a point. However, I am not saying that this is not a problem that should be ignored.

I believe that we have two separate issues here: children and adults viewing pornography on library computers. Can they be resolved simultaneously? I honestly don't know. Perhaps. I believe that technology, something other than filters, can help accomplish this. While not insurmountable, it will be a difficult task. One potential obstacle that instantly comes to mind because it's a major topic in today's news, is privacy. Does a library patron have the right to privacy while using library computers? By that I mean does a library have the right to monitor how a computer is being used by a patron? There are a number of software monitoring programs that can be used to see what a user is doing; companies use them all the time to monitor employees - rightly so or not, actively used or not. Can such devices be used in libraries and "abusers" such as described in the article be banned from future computer use in the library? I don't know, I'm just thinking out loud. I'm sure that most libraries have rules, that when broken, end up with patrons having privileges revoked.

Would this monitoring fall on library workers? Probably. Those that would be offended by such a responsibility should not be made to do so. Some libraries have security guards - maybe they can be utilized.

As I mentioned early on, this is really more than one issue: kids and adults. The suggestion I made in my original editorial seems plausible: provide special ID cards for computer use. Let the parents determine what kind of access their children should have, and program the cards accordingly (filtered versus non-filtered access). Abusers would be dealt with accordingly. As to adults, if they abuse their privileges by actions

such as mentioned in the above article, revoke their privileges. Adults viewing pornography using library computers is not something I'm concerned about. However, if by doing so disrupts or harms other patrons or employees, it's a problem much like other ones. Then it needs to be handled accordingly.

I think both problems need to be addressed while maintaining everyone's rights - whether it be to access information using these computers regardless of what it is - to protecting the employees (and general public for that matter) from having to be subjected to offensive material or actions by the users. Applying filters to library computers is not the answer. And using funding as a means to apply leverage to libraries to use filters is also not right. My original stance supporting San Francisco stands. But I do agree that there needs to be more work done. Thanks for bringing another viewpoint to my attention.

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, time is no longer marching toward autumn, it's running double-time straight through it.

For those who take pleasure in such things, the fall foliage is now at its peak here in Connecticut. The colors of the falling leaves really are amazing. I've lived here all my life and it still catches my eye every year. It seems that nature continues to amaze and enthrall me, even after all these years.

It's not so much that I'm simple-minded (although that HAS been said on more than one occasion), but that I usually look at things and ask, "how would you make that happen".

Where nature is concerned, it seems that we take a back seat every time. Sure, we've succeeded in making little enclosures for ourselves where we can regulate temperature, humidity and lighting, but the cost in resources and required energy input is huge, and the effects are fleeting.

Mother Nature, on the other hand, uses everything to its best advantage. Using sunlight, plant life creates products that feed animal life which produces products that feeds plant life, etc., etc., etc.

Nature takes its time with what it does. We, on the other hand, tend to jump in without fully understanding... or even caring about... the consequences.

I know that I probably sound like one of those "tree-hugging, sit-in-having, technology-hating" weirdos, but that's really not the case. I'm familiar enough with both sides of the equation (nature and technology) to be amazed at how complex simplicity can be. And vice versa.

I also know that this has absolutely nothing to do with Atari computers. But I think it's important that we all put things in perspective once in a while. And who knows? Perhaps sometime in the near future we'll finally be able to manufacture biological processors. Mark my words... when it DOES happen, someone will notice that this design that took millions of man-hours and billions of dollars to create is "almost exactly" like one already found in nature.

Now let's get to the UseNet stuff.

From the comp.sys.atari.st Newsgroup
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Derek Hunt asks about inverted screen colors:

"A small thing that has been "bugging" me for a while which I know some one out there knows the answer too. I'm sure I have read it myself somewhere but this old brainbox is getting well past its sell by date.

I have a small programme (4.7.11 in fact) as a ACC which helps while away the time during the middle of the night, I being well beyond normal nighttime activities !! When closing the prog down the screen is inverted.ie white becomes black and black is white. This means having to reboot to use my normal setup,a pain at times."

Charles Stanley tells Derek:

"Have you tried to go ControlPanel/ColorSetUp [1] and click Reload (at bottom right of panel, if you can't see it yet)? That should do it.

[1] Or whatever name it has: mine is COLORVDI.CPX v 2.10."

Derek tells Charles:

"Thanks for that Charles. Yes I have tried that and clicking on Reload does indeed return to the original colour BUT the next page brought up is again reverted. In other words the only way for me to have my original setup is to completely reboot."

Don Wolfe asks about using his JAZ drive with HD Driver:

"I have 4 partitions on a JAZ 2GB removable disk (GHIJ) H was giving me some write errors so I moved all wanted files from the disk to other disks. I checked the drive H: with HD and it showed bad sectors, so I decided to let HD reformat the plater.

The program said the process could be several hours, so I started the formatting and left the room for 2 hours, when I next checked the disk there was a message that it could not format the disk, so now when I try to partition this disk the message is: Couldn't Read Root Sector of G:

Question, is there any Utilities for repairing the Root Sector as before the formatting partitions G,I,J where all good... Any Ideas ??"

Dr. Uwe Seimet, author of HD Driver tells Don:

"No, there isn't. With most drives the root sector is only accessible after the drive could correctly terminate the format process. This was not possible in your case, i. e. the damage on the cartridge is so bad that the JAZ was not able to format it. Try to format it a second time. If you're lucky, this will work. If not the cartridge is simply damaged and cannot be used anymore."

Dennis van der Burg asks for help with his new MagnumST card:

"Yesterday I installed a MagnumST card into my Mega ST1. This is a board that goes on top of the MC68000 and upgrades the system to TOS 2.06 and also expands the memory with 4/8/11 MB, depending on the size of the SIMM you put onto the board.

Now I have the following problem: the TOS 2.06 upgrade works fine, but if I put in a 4 or 8 MB SIMM, the driver MAGNUMST.PRG recognizes only 512kB :-(
What might be wrong here?

By the way, I got the driver from <http://www.uweschneider.de/>

Michael Schwingen tells Dennis:

"Provided the card is OK (I know some which were manufactured by a sub-contractor had soldering problems, especially at the PS/2 socket), it might be you got a SIMM with asymmetric (unequal # rows/columns) DRAMs.

The MagnumST does not support these - although they were not very common in PS/2 style.

Do you have a chance to try a different SIMM?

If the TOS on the Magnum works, then the installation is most probably correct."

Dennis replies:

"Thank you for your advice!
I checked the MagnumST card's connectivity from the PS/2 socket to the card (with an ohmmeter) and that seems to be OK. The TOS on the Magnum still works fine, too.

I also tried 5 different SIMMS (4 and 8 MB types) which I got from a friend, in all cases only 512kB of it is found (but I can load programs in that 512 kB without problems!)"...

Alan Hourihane asks about the TT's LAN port:

"Has anyone got the pinouts for the LAN port on the TT030 ?

Or has anyone connected it to a PC successfully to zmodem things around and can show the cable they're using ?"

Lyndon Amsdon tells Alan:

"I converted my Falcon LAN port to a standard RS232 port. It was a simple task and I really must put the info on my website but I feel I

forgot where I put the wiring I devised."

Martin-Eric Racine adds:

"The cable is a rather standard one, usually sold under the name "Mac modem cable". It's traditionally used to plug a standard modem into a Mac.

Another alternative, if connecting to a Mac or Sun computer equipped with an RS-422 interface, is the "Mac printer cable" which can be used as a null modem cable."

Don Wolfe, after messing about with his JAZ drive, posts:

"Thanks for all the great information.. I reformatted the 2GB platter the second time with the same results (Can't format this Disk). I decided to try it one more time, well the third time it worked like a charm the disk came out clean and checked out with no bad sectors.:)

I may have been doing it wrong the first 2 times, the third time I clicked on the Box "Ignore Current Defect List" which maybe should have been done the first 2 tries ??

Now the big Question is: What caused the write errors in the first place is it a Bug in the operating system or is it just Murphy's Law ??"

Uwe Seimet tells Don:

"This [checking the "Ignore Current Defect List" box] should not really have been necessary.

This problem had nothing to do with the OS or any other software. SCSI drives do formatting completely on their own, as soon as they get the SCSI FORMAT command. So if something goes wrong like in your case the drive itself had problems with the cartridge."

James Alexander adds his thoughts on a related subject:

"This may be a bit of topic drift but I've always liked the Syquest removables. I find it a bit odd that they never became more widespread. They were and are quite usable on atari systems at that."

Bill Freeman tells James:

"I had good service from two Syquest EZ135 drives, but don't waste your money on the SyJet drives. I had three of them, all three turned to junk in very short order. They could never be relied on to read or write a cart. SyJets were a complete waste of money and probably what drove the last nail into Syquest's coffin.

I'm still using the Syquest EZ135s, along with a Yamaha CD-R drive now."

Well folks, that's it for this time around. Now turn of the computer for a little while, and go take a look at those autumn leaves. Of course if you're in the southern hemisphere, you can go outside and admire the new shoots and buds of springtime.

Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Xbox Debut At X01! Wreckless!  
    " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " "  
                                Spiderman and X-Men! Kinetica!  
                                Shrek On Xbox! Tony Hawk!  
                                And much more!
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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Activision Acquires Worldwide Rights to
WRECKLESS - First Mission-Based
Driving Game for Xbox

Activision, Inc. announced it has acquired the worldwide publishing rights, excluding Japan, for WRECKLESS, the first mission-based driving game for the Xbox video game system from Microsoft. Developed by Bunkasha Publishing, WRECKLESS has been selected by Microsoft as a premier title for first quarter 2002 and will be released to coincide with the European launch of Xbox. WRECKLESS is currently rated ``RP" (Rating Pending) by the ESRB and is expected to ship in both North America and Europe in early 2002.

"We are thrilled that Microsoft has selected WRECKLESS as a lead game for the first quarter of 2002 and that the game will be among the first wave of titles for the Xbox European launch," said Larry Goldberg, executive vice president, worldwide studios for Activision. "WRECKLESS takes advantage of the sophisticated graphics, audio and multiplayer capabilities available from Xbox and will deliver an incredible new experience for fans of mission-based driving games. The game lets players explore the mean streets of Hong Kong as they engage in non-stop full throttle action."

``With its outstanding graphics and compelling gameplay, WRECKLESS is set to revolutionize the mission-based driving genre," said J Allard, general manager Xbox platform and third-party relations. ``As one of the premier titles for Xbox, we are putting full marketing muscle behind WRECKLESS to build consumer awareness for what we believe to be one of this winter's most anticipated releases."

A high suspense, fast-paced, no-holds-barred driving game, WRECKLESS immerses players into the unpredictable underworld of Hong Kong. Gamers can choose from two distinct storylines -- to be part of an elite task force assigned to take down the Hong Kong mafia or to become a high-level government agent trying to uncover links between the mafia and the police.

WRECKLESS lets players take full control of the action as they pursue thugs and gang members in 20 hair-raising missions. Gamers choose from 10 different vehicles as they race through an interactive city and maneuver real traffic patterns, tear through parks and drive on sidewalks to complete their mission. However, players have to be careful, as real-time damage modeling will hinder their vehicle's performance.

The Future of Video Games Makes European Debut at X01

Xbox Makes European Debut, Showcases 40 Playable Games

Amid the breathtaking cliff tops of Theoule-Sur-Mer overlooking the Cote d'Azur, in an inspirational and stylish mansion designed by Pierre Cardin and populated with nearly a thousand video game industry guests, the Xbox video game system made its European debut.

The event, called X01 and hosted by Xbox, provided more details on one of the most eagerly awaited video game launches ever. As green light rose into the sky and dry ice wafted over the crowd, European price, availability and planned shipment quantities were revealed, ending months of speculation by the Xbox faithful.

Xbox will be available at retail outlets in 16 major European markets beginning 14th March 2002 for an anticipated retail price of euro 479/(pound)299. The majority of Xbox titles are expected to launch at an anticipated retail price of euro 69/(pound)44.99. A total of 1.5 million Xbox consoles are planned for shipment in Europe for its first three months on sale (to the end of June 2002), which includes weekly replenishments from the Xbox manufacturing facility in Hungary.

The Games

It's all about the games, and the range revealed at X01 demonstrated the large amount of support that Xbox enjoys from 3rd party developers, as well as a stellar line-up of 1st party games. In total there were 40 playable games at X01, with many more being announced for the first time or shown on video.

Peter Molyneux of Lionhead Studios announced his second Xbox-exclusive game, BC, an exciting new title being developed by Lionhead satellite Intrepid Games. In addition Molyneux ran a demonstration of his previously under-wraps Xbox RPG, Project Ego, in which players control a character who ages from childhood to death, whose skin tans from the sunlight over time, and with graphics and gameplay that take advantage of many of the advanced capabilities of Xbox. Both titles will be published by Microsoft Games.

Microsoft announced more titles from its first-party game development division including Brute Force, a futuristic squad-based, tactical shooter played from a third person perspective and with stunning graphics, and Rallisport Challenge, a unique rally racing game with four different types of rally competition.

Other major announcements from third-party publishers included:

- * Electronic Arts: Announced and demonstrated an Xbox-exclusive version of F1 2002 which will include the new season's course and driver data

- * Activision: Announced and had a playable version of Wreckless, an Xbox-exclusive mission-based driving game
- * Tecmo: First European playable version of the highly anticipated and Xbox-exclusive fighting game Dead Or Alive 3
- * Sega: Debut of playable demos in Europe of Xbox firsts Jet Set Radio Future, GunValkyrie and Sega GT 2002
- * Eidos: Announced and demoed an Xbox version of Championship Manager, the highly successful football management game now on a console for the first time
- * Infogrames: Playable Atari title Transworld Surfing - the first unveiling of an Xbox game under the Atari brand
- * Ubi Soft: Announced Ghost Recon as an Xbox exclusive; first showing of Batman Vengeance and Rayman M on Xbox
- * THQ: First European playable version of the Xbox-exclusive motorcycle racer Moto GP

X01- The Xbox Experience

X01 is the result of months of planning by the European Xbox team at Microsoft, who wanted to create an event that was more than a press conference or a trade show. The team wanted an experience, and it had to reflect the excitement that Xbox has brought to Europe.

"Xbox is something special," said Sandy Duncan, Vice President, Xbox Europe, "and we needed to create an experience that would do it justice. We wanted our guests to go away not with just an update on games progress, but with a real feeling for what Xbox stands for in Europe and a glimpse of the future."

The location, Maison Bulles (bubble house), is owned by legendary French designer Pierre Cardin, who designed it almost 30 years ago. With breathtaking views across the Cote d'Azur from almost every part of the house, Maison Bulles is still at the cutting edge of style, blending 70s chic and space age elegance. X01 guests got to explore its bubble-shaped rooms, elliptical portholes, sculpted pools, underwater living room and 400-seater, open-air amphitheatre over the event's two days.

"Clearly we needed a special venue for such a special event," said Duncan. "Maison Bulles is in close parallel with Xbox - stylish, futuristic and unique, with global appeal."

Nearly one thousand journalists and representatives from the video game industry, from all over Europe as well as North America and Asia, packed the modern cliff-top amphitheatre of the house as the sun set. The event kicked off with Sandy Duncan announcing price and availability, and continued on to offer demonstrations and announcements of games launching with Xbox and beyond.

After the announcements, guests were allowed to explore the rest of the house, where each publisher-themed room featured demos of the games Europe will be playing on 14th March and beyond. Guests were free to wander around and take in the experience at their leisure.

The evening concluded with a live set by Carl Cox, internationally renowned DJ, who entertained the crowd until the small hours.

Gamers get ready to nose slide and pull 900's with the speed and agility of Tony Hawk when Activision, Inc. releases one of the most anticipated games of the holiday season, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, on October 30, 2001. The title, which is currently in manufacturing, will be available for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system and PlayStation game console and will carry suggested retail prices of \$49.99 and \$39.99 respectively.

Developed by Neversoft Entertainment, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 is the revolutionary sequel to the best-selling sports game of 2000. Offering eight massive levels filled with people, traffic, and other interactive elements, the environments are brought to life with richer graphics and advanced special effects. Smoother life-like animations and significantly improved tricks capture the style of 13 of the world's best skateboarding pros.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 will be the first online game for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system. Console gamers can log onto the Internet and skate in virtual skateparks with their friends from around the world.

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3 has received the following ratings by the ESRB: PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system - 'T' (Teen - with blood, mild lyrics and suggestive themes), PlayStation game console - 'E' (Everyone - with mild lyrics and violence).

Spider-Man and the X-Men Bring
Electrifying Adventures And Advanced
Mutant Moves to the Holiday Season

Some of the world's most celebrated crime fighters are back in full force with the release of Activision, Inc.'s Spider-Man 2 Enter: Electro and X-Men: Mutant Academy 2 for the PlayStation game console. Both titles are currently available on North American retail shelves and carry a suggested retail price of \$39.99.

"Both Spider-Man 2 Enter: Electro and X-Men: Mutant Academy 2 bring to life all of the amazing abilities of Marvel's greatest Super Heroes," said Larry Goldberg, executive vice president, Activision Worldwide Studios. "These games feature advanced gameplay and an expanded cast of characters who give players more Super Hero action than ever before."

Spider-Man 2 Enter: Electro is the highly anticipated sequel to last year's blockbuster game. Once again, players are Spider-Man, swinging and webbing their way across New York in a whole new 3D fast-paced, action-adventure. This time around, Spider-Man's trademark skills, as well as all-new web attacks, costumes and fighting combos, are needed to thwart new super-villains and the powerful Electro's evil plans. Add in a Parker's Portfolio of battle snapshots and the world of Spider-Man comes alive like never before on the PlayStation. The title is rated 'E' ('Everyone' -- Violence -- content suitable for persons ages 6 and older) by the ESRB.

X-Men: Mutant Academy 2 is the sequel to the action-packed favorite X-Men: Mutant Academy. The game features stunning new aerial combat, six new X-Men characters, including Rogue, Nightcrawler, Havok and Forge, six new arenas and costumes, set sketches and conceptual art sketches from "X-Men: The Movie." Set against classic comic book locales, X-Men: Mutant Academy 2 lets players take on the unique personalities and moves of their favorite

X-Men characters and a choice of four different modes of play: Academy Training, Arcade, Survival and Versus (classic two-player fighter mode), where players are able to battle foes with improved combat options, new aerial combinations, new aerial combinations, hard hitting recoils and a "get up quick" feature. The title is rated "T" ("Teen" -- Violence -- content suitable for persons ages 13 and older) by the ESRB.

Kinetica Brings the Ultimate Evolution in Racing to the PlayStation2

Merging of Man and Machine Provides Maximum Agility, Insane
Stunts And Terminal Speed in Unique Racing Experience

Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. announced the release of Kinetica, exclusively for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. Focusing on the thrill of intense competition, Kinetica provides pure arcade-style racing and incorporates intricate track design, aggressive opposition and futuristic speed and maneuverability to deliver a unique adrenaline-filled racing experience. The first fully internally developed title by Sony Computer Entertainment America, Santa Monica, Kinetica showcases the capabilities of the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system, with superior graphics and animations, intense gameplay and detailed racing atmospheres. Complex track designs and carefully tuned artificial intelligence combine to create a fast and competitive racing experience that will captivate gamers for hours.

Kinetica captures the spirit and competition of arcade-style futuristic racing, as players integrate into one of nine Kinetic suits, scientifically advanced exoskeletons, each engineered for racing in diverse, extreme environments. Moreover, the maneuverability of the Kinetic Suits allows racers to adhere to almost any surface, perform insane aerial stunts, and draft behind opponents to create an unparalleled competitive environment. Intense competition will keep racers on the edge of their seats as each opponent contains an individually tuned artificial intelligence that adjusts and adapts its driving over the course of the race, paving the way for intense competitive races.

"Kinetica allows the spirited nature of racing to assert itself in the most dramatic ways possible. Opponents create an intense rider-to-rider interaction, showcasing the extreme essence of racing. We are thrilled to bring Kinetica to the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system," said Ami Blaire, director, product marketing, Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc. "Through a winning combination of some of the most imaginative people in the industry, Kinetica delivers a one-of-a-kind arcade-style racing experience that is poised to take the racing genre to the next level."

With more than 12 futuristic tracks that have their own distinctive personality, design tempo, and challenging obstacles, Kinetica provides a truly unique racing experience. Kinetica tracks are specifically designed to allow gamers to take full advantage of all conceivable maneuvers, including multiple line corners, alternative crossover pathways and maintaining stability at terminal speeds. Players can explore alternative routes not only in the form of multiple paths, but wall also through riding and gravity defying ceiling runs that give the competitive edge to players with imagination and intestinal fortitude.

The independent Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) has rated

Kinetica ``T" for Teen.

EA SPORTS Ships NASCAR Thunder 2002
for the PlayStation 2

Get ready to start your engines with Electronic Arts' (EA) newest release, NASCAR Thunder 2002 for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. This is the first NASCAR console video game to feature a full pack of 43 cars, bringing a new level of depth, realism and authenticity for NASCAR video gaming.

EA SPORTS, in its fifth year of involvement with NASCAR, has created a game with more cars and traffic to navigate and draft off of, for more bumper-to-bumper racing throughout. Game players can choose from more than 50 drivers including, Jeff Gordon, Dale Earnhardt Jr., Tony Stewart, Bobby Labonte, Ricky Rudd, Dale Jarrett and Michael Waltrip.

``EA SPORTS has raised the bar for NASCAR video gaming," said Jeff Gordon, NASCAR Winston Cup Series star. ``This game has got all the tracks, cars and drivers that make the sport great and with 43 cars on the track it's just like a Sunday afternoon at the track. NASCAR Thunder 2002 looks great and is a lot of fun to play!" NASCAR Thunder 2002 features all 23 tracks found in the NASCAR Winston Cupfi Series including the new, Chicagoland and Kansas Speedways.

The new career mode allows gamers the chance to go after ``The King," Richard Petty's record tying seven NASCAR Winston Cup Series championships while developing a personal NASCAR Team from scratch. Players can choose a manufacturer, create their own unique paint scheme for the car, and earn offers and decals from new sponsors based on performance. Race winnings can be applied to equip players' crews and vehicles, increasing horsepower, handling and pit crew performance, even earning the right to race for an existing NASCAR team.

``I am thrilled with the game we created this year," said Ed Martin, director of NASCAR production, EA SPORTS. ``We had an aggressive plan at the start of this project and have clearly delivered the deepest, richest NASCAR console racing experience on the market. The team is passionate about motor sports and this is reflected in the depth of NASCAR Thunder 2002."

Developed at Electronic Arts - Tiburon, the makers of the Madden NFL franchise, NASCAR Thunder 2002 features a huge pack of stunning cars in the richest EA SPORTS NASCAR environments. The graphic engine's horsepower allows the team to incorporate an accurate damage model, with cars that dent and crumple and lose auto parts as they collide with other cars and track barriers. When car damage is repaired the cars morph back to its original state. Other damage effects include tire donuts on body panels, tire smoke, dislodged car parts and contained oil fires.

In addition to the PlayStation 2 version, NASCAR Thunder 2002 is currently available for the PlayStation, and due out this fall for the Xbox video game system from Microsoft. The PlayStation version features a field of 16 cars, all 23 NASCAR tracks found in the Winston Cup Series and five fantasy tracks. Now players can blast along the beach that started it all, Daytona Beach. Over 30 NASCAR stars are in this version as well as Thunder Cards which allow users to unlock cars and tracks, as well as offensive and

defensive power-ups that increase horsepower, mileage, tire and brake durability.

One of the tracks featured in NASCAR Thunder 2002 is the prestigious Talladega Superspeedway in Talladega, Alabama. Last month, EA SPORTS announced a three-year deal with Talladega, naming the legendary NASCAR Winston Cup Series fall race the EA SPORTS 500, which will air nationally on NBC October 21. EA SPORTS becomes just the third NASCAR Winston Cup Series sponsor in Talladega's 32-year racing history. The EA SPORTS sponsorship of the race was the inspiration for including the classic southern rock song, "Sweet Home Alabama" by Lynyrd Skynyrd, in the game.

TDK Mediactive's "Shrek" to Premiere On Xbox

TDK Mediactive, Inc. announced that "Shrek" for the Xbox video game system from Microsoft, is scheduled to be on the shelves on Xbox launch day, November 15, 2001.

The much-anticipated Xbox title ships on the heels of the VHS and DVD release of the computer-animated feature film "Shrek" from DreamWorks Pictures, which will launch on November 2, 2001 nationwide. With beautiful, eye-catching graphics inspired by the movie, "Shrek" for the Xbox is well positioned to be a breakout game title for the upcoming holiday season. Suggested retail price for "Shrek" for Xbox is \$49.99.

"We are very excited to be a part of the Xbox launch. TDK, Digital Illusions and Microsoft pulled out all the stops for the product development effort of Shrek," said Vincent Bitetti, chief executive officer of TDK Mediactive. "With the added support of DreamWorks, 'Shrek' for Xbox has the rapid momentum and broad appeal to make it a top-selling title for this breakthrough system."

"The 'Shrek' Xbox game creates whole new worlds for 'Shrek'," said Brad Globe, head of DreamWorks Consumer Products. "TDK has delivered a terrific combination of original, action-packed gameplay and Shrek-style humor."

"Shrek" for Xbox is being featured in the Xbox retail demo disk and brochure, and on Xbox point of purchase displays which will be in stores through holiday. The game will also be featured in the Xbox Odyssey, a mobile gaming experience that will travel around the country and promote the system and games to consumers.

"People really respond to 'Shrek' for Xbox. Its humor, fast-paced, quirky gameplay and cinema-like graphics make it one of the ground-breaking Xbox launch titles," said J Allard, General Manager, Xbox Platform. "'Shrek' is a great example of how the Xbox allows us to draw images at the same level of quality of feature films. This will completely change the way that people view video games."

Exclusive hints and tips for the "Shrek" Xbox game will be featured on all units of the "Shrek" DVD. Also part of DreamWorks' home video launch is an instant-win game in which consumers can win an Xbox video game system with a "Shrek" Xbox video game, a Nintendo Gameboy Advance system with Shrek Fairy Tale FreakDown Game Boy game, along with other featured prizes. The launch of the home video and the instant win game is being supported by a massive print, radio, and television advertising campaign.

The Magic Mirror has an important message for Shrek. You see, it seems that the evil sorcerer, Merlin, has captured the lovely Princess Fiona and has her locked in his Dark Tower Fortress of Pure Evil...Wha ha ha ha!

In order to face off with Merlin, Shrek must travel to the Dark Tower Fortress of Pure Evil (...Wha ha ha ha!), but a thick and foul fog surrounds it. The only way to clear the fog and gain access is to perform Good Deeds across the Fairy Tale Lands. To help him out, the Magic Mirror gives Shrek a Book of Good Deeds and offers to teleport Shrek to places where Good Deeds are required...

'Shrek" for the Xbox features the following:

- * Eight never-before-seen worlds with six missions per level
- * Beautifully bump-mapped environments, real-time shadows, and detailed characters, taking full advantage of the outstanding graphics capabilities of Xbox
- * Sarcastic and twisted humor throughout
- * Whimsical game play populated with new original characters as well as characters from the film

Capcom Releases Devil May Cry

Capcom released Devil May Cry, an incredible "gothic action" game for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. A PlayStation 2 exclusive, Devil May Cry launches with a multi-million dollar marketing campaign that includes National television advertising and features in numerous PlayStation 2 promotions such as demo disks and box. Devil May Cry was ranked as one of the run-away hits at the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo and is described by the trade, press and consumer as a destined-to-be blockbuster.

Devil May Cry is designed by Resident Evil creator and mastermind, Shinji Mikami. This action thriller tells the story of Dante, the descendent of a legendary swordsman who has wages a one-man battle against the demon world in order to carry out a 2000 year-old revenge. A playable demo of Devil May Cry was included in the August release of Resident Evil Code: Veronica X. Devil May Cry carries an "M" rating for mature audiences from the Entertainment Software Rating Board. Strategy Guides are available from BradyGames, Prima Publishing and Versus.

Devil May Cry is backed with impressive features:

- * Stunning game graphics and animation are instantly recognized as far and above all other PlayStation 2 titles.
- * Possesses an incredibly dark and gothic tone with an artistically crafted art style.
- * Unsurpassed particle effects and light-sourcing set a new standard in video game realism.
- * Introduces an all-new level of character control allowing amazing depth of character movement.
- * Fluid game play with fast action sword and gun-play combat
- * Shinji Mikami, the original producer and Hideki Kamiya, the original director of Resident Evil 2 are reunited for the first time since the creation of the massive Resident Evil 2 blockbuster.

As the lead character in Devil May Cry, Dante is a dark figure shrouded in

mystery. Legend has it that 2000 years ago, in the depths of hell, a demon swordsman, awoke to justice and rebelled against the devil, to wage a one-man war in support of the human world. Now, 2000 years later, Dante, a private investigator of the supernatural, realizes that the devil is rallying to rise again against mankind. How does Dante fit into this gothic puzzle? Deep within Dante's blood lies the power of ancient demons. As his power builds he transforms into a demon state where he can inflict unearthly powers on the retched souls he encounters. As Dante continues his adventure he will find powerful weaponry including his dual-pistols and shotguns. Dante will also discover powerful swords, each possessing various elemental powers. This devil hunter will lead players into the fantastic dark world as Dante's destiny is played out in a gothic battle of good against evil.

As he seeks revenge for the past, Dante will face many evil beings, including:

- * Demonic marionettes -- These low-class demons put their souls into emotionless marionettes. These creatures normally are slow but can move surprisingly fast when attacking humans.
- * Death Beings -- These beings encompass death and are similar to grim reapers. Death beings can hover in the air and travel through walls. They use over-sized scissors or a scythe as their weapons of choice.
- * Phantom -- These high level demons rule all other demons in the old castle. They are huge, ugly creatures that resemble spiders with a dark aura. These creatures are more intelligent than humans and are capable of fierce magic using fire or ground-shaking power.

'Devil May Cry is a revolutionary game that will light up the marketplace," says Todd Thorson, director of marketing, Capcom Entertainment. 'The game has an incredible story and Dante has as much attitude and swagger as a rock 'n roll superstar. Devil May Cry surpasses the previous technical advancements of the PlayStation 2 by showcasing stunning graphics and tight gameplay that immerses gamers into a dark fantasy world. Capcom Executive Producer, Shinji Mikami has created another masterpiece."

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Judge Appoints Mediator in Microsoft Case

The U.S. District Court judge overseeing the Microsoft antitrust case has chosen a mediator to preside over settlement talks.

Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly issued an order late Friday appointing Boston University law professor Eric Green to mediate for the two sides. The judge noted that both parties had suggested Green for the job.

Judge Kollar-Kotelly has warned both sides that if they fail to reach a

settlement by November 2nd, she will set hearings in March to determine sanctions against Microsoft for its antitrust violations.

But Kollar-Kotelly seemed cautiously optimistic about the chances for a settlement in the four-year-old case.

"Based upon the parties' representations, the Court is satisfied at this point that the parties have been diligent in their efforts to comply with the Court's previous order," Judge Kollar-Kotelly wrote in Friday's order.

"However, as the importance of these negotiations cannot be overemphasized, the Court urges the parties to remain steadfast in their efforts to reach a mutually agreeable resolution."

Although neither side has indicated why Green was chosen to mediate a potential settlement, the Boston University law professor, who specializes in negotiating and mediating legal disagreements, appears eminently well-suited to the role. Green also founded two mediation concerns: Resolutions, LLC and JAMS/Endispute, Inc.

Rob Enderle, vice president and research fellow for Giga Information Group, told NewsFactor Network that a judge presiding over this sort of case will typically present the parties with a shortlist of candidates from which to choose a mediator, and that the parties agree on whom they perceive to be the most moderate choice.

Enderle declined to comment on why the two sides settled on Green. He did note, however, that Green will probably wield more power than the average mediator.

"Whatever this mediator decides will likely be what the judge affirms," Enderle said.

Microsoft, the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the 18 states that have joined with the DOJ have attempted settlement talks on three previous occasions, and all have ended in failure. The most recent attempt, over which Appeals Court Judge Richard Posner presided during a four-month stretch, ended in April 2000.

However, David Smith, vice-president and research director for Internet strategies at Gartner Inc., told NewsFactor that Green's chances for mediating a successful settlement are significantly higher than those of his predecessors, because all sides now have more incentive to settle than they did in the past.

"The last time a serious settlement was attempted occurred several years ago," and the present political climate has changed since that time, Smith noted.

Smith said political realities, ranging from Bush administration assurances that Microsoft would not be broken up, to the events of September 11th, have changed the playing field.

Moreover, the terms for settlement are edging more in Microsoft's favor.

"There's been a continued lessening of the ultimate remedy until Microsoft can stomach it," Smith said. "Microsoft will never give in, while the government continues to give in more and more over time."

Microsoft Aims at AOL with New MSN, Broadband Offer

Microsoft on Monday said it will revamp its MSN online offerings later this month and has signed new deals with major telephone companies to offer high-speed Internet access as the software giant goes head to head with rival AOL Time Warner Inc.

Microsoft will offer MSN over digital subscriber lines (DSL) through partnerships with Verizon Communications, BellSouth Corp. and SBC Communications Inc., Chief Executive Steve Ballmer told a conference call.

The new deals will offer high-speed access to 90 percent of DSL-capable U.S. homes by early next year, Ballmer said.

MSN is in a race with AOL, a unit of AOL Time Warner Inc., to sign up users to fast Internet services, like DSL, that can deliver features like quality video and audio. MSN, with about 7 million subscribers, is dwarfed by No. 1 AOL, with 31 million subscribers.

AOL declined to comment on the MSN moves. It has focused on using an extensive cable television network for fast service, but also has the same DSL phone deals as Microsoft.

Microsoft said high-speed MSN will cost less than \$50 a month, and new subscribers will receive two months free, a free DSL modem and free installation.

''Literally every subscriber will become up for grabs as they move from narrowband to broadband," Ballmer said.

MSN Vice President Yusuf Mehdi said the charge into DSL did not mean Microsoft was ignoring other fast Internet options, like cable or satellite.

''The DSL market was the easiest set of partnerships for us to put together. On cable, we're hoping that open-access cable really comes to bear," Mehdi told Reuters.

MSN already offers high-speed access through a partnership with Qwest Communications International Inc.

The MSN update, called MSN 7, becomes effective Oct. 25, the same day Microsoft launches its new Windows XP operating system, and will include changes to Web sites like the MSN.com portal and services like its free Hotmail electronic mail.

''We know we're the No. 2 guy in the market, but we're working hard and working harder," Ballmer said. ''We're able to level competitive heat on AOL Time Warner."

The biggest new feature will be support for a new Microsoft service called .NET Alerts, which sends information, like traffic conditions and travel itineraries, to an e-mail account, instant messenger, or mobile telephone.

''MSN is really a pillar on which we are building the next generation, if you will, of Microsoft. In some ways, MSN represents the consumer productivity application for the 21st century," Ballmer said.

Other changes to MSN include giving a new look to MSN.com and beefing it up to run 30 percent faster.

Additional content will include news clips, music videos, and 3-D tours of houses that are for sale, optimized for fast Internet access, MSN product manager Lisa Gurry said in an interview.

MSN Explorer -- essentially a custom browser with bright, cartoon-like controls, built-in links to Microsoft services and an integrated digital media player -- will feature easier setup, a more organized look and new sections for games and horoscopes.

Hotmail will let users compose mail offline, offer better junk mail filters and editing tools.

Microsoft's messaging software, called MSN Messenger, will also get a makeover to include Internet telephone calls and .NET Alerts.

Alerts let users sign up to receive information through MSN Messenger, e-mail or a mobile phone. Initially most Alerts will be offered by Microsoft and include traffic reports through its Carpoint auto buying site. Other companies like auctioneer eBay Inc. are also creating Alerts.

AOL Releases Latest Net Access Update

As Microsoft's MSN continued to up the online ante, America Online Inc. Tuesday released its latest Internet service software, AOL 7.0. This version adds access to more music, local content and high-speed features.

AOL, a unit of AOL Time Warner, for the most part enhanced existing services, such as e-mail, instant messaging, its "buddy list" feature and media player, and made software downloading faster. The Dulles, Va.-based ISP built-in radio and ticket services for consumer short cuts to entertainment. AOL, the world's largest ISP with 31 million subscribers, charges \$23.95 monthly for unlimited access.

However, AOL said its latest software would focus on bringing local content first and faster to the consumer. Its "welcome" screen will automatically feature news, weather, sports and events tied to the user's zipcode, instead of forcing users to type in a zipcode.

Microsoft, in a distant second place with 7 million paid members, announced on Monday the MSN 7 update to coincide with its Windows XP release on Oct. 25. Microsoft charges \$21.95 for unlimited access.

Microsoft also said it would expand its high-speed Internet services over digital subscriber lines through agreements with regional phone companies.

AOL and Microsoft are vying for the loyalty of consumers in engaging in transactions, communicating with other users, accessing account data and universal sign-on services. AOL 7.0 continues to use Microsoft's Internet Explorer as its default browser.

Microsoft-AOL Face Off Over Win XP

With the coming of Windows XP and .Net, Microsoft and AOL are primed to step up their battle for control of Internet--and it won't be pretty.

At an America Online staff meeting in 1994, then-President Ted Leonsis wheeled out a wooden cutout of a bare-fanged Tyrannosaurus rex meant to symbolize the company's most menacing enemy: Microsoft.

Leonsis' representation was both right and wrong. The software giant indeed presented a major threat at the time--the eve of the launch of its Microsoft Network--but its battle form would come to resemble a multiheaded Hydra more than a prehistoric monster. Rather than full-frontal assaults, Microsoft would attack from many directions simultaneously and regenerate appendages whenever they were severed.

"That's the way you win a war; you don't do it with monster battles unless you're sure you can win them," said Carl Howe, an analyst at Forrester Research. "You do it by finding weaknesses in the enemy's lines before you mount your big attack."

Although shorter-sighted thinkers initially viewed the companies as disparate media and software businesses, executives at AOL, now a division of AOL Time Warner, have long known that their counterparts ensconced in Redmond, Wash., had the same goal: to "own" the Internet user, absorbing his or her identity into a virtual world where cybercitizens travel, purchase, communicate and plan their daily lives. That concept became increasingly important as companies and Web sites began charging for content and services to survive.

AOL's route to this destination has involved drawing in consumers with dial-up Internet access, then guiding them through the rest of its features. Now Microsoft, with vaguely defined .Net strategies that will launch with its Windows XP operating system, is pursuing a similar kind of recruitment and retention, with services offered for monthly subscriptions rather than through the traditional one-time purchase of its software either directly or via computers already loaded with its products.

Windows XP and .Net are "clearly an effort by Microsoft to emulate the subscription model that has been quite successful for AOL Time Warner in all of its component parts," said John Buckley, an AOL Time Warner spokesman. "But the question is--even with their monopoly--whether they'll be more successful in their effort than they have been previously. We have a significant advantage in this space."

Another question, though, is how long that upper hand can be held.

It is true that AOL is the clear leader in dial-up Internet service, with 31 million subscribers--a total more than four times greater than that of second-place MSN. But Microsoft has managed to make significant inroads with popular technologies such as instant messaging. Windows XP promises to escalate the competition with more services in communications, multimedia and other areas that will challenge AOL on several fronts.

Moreover, for all the controversy over Microsoft's technology monopolies, AOL has been cast in the unusual role of media bully to the software company. Ever since it blocked MSN Messenger subscribers from communicating with its own IM network, AOL has been accused of thwarting efforts to devise an industry standard that would allow all chat technologies to work together.

That domineering image apparently does not sit well with the public. A survey by research company Gartner released in August indicated that consumers distrust AOL more than they do Microsoft in the handling of personal and financial information. This kind of credibility gap could become a crucial factor in the next major confrontation between the two online superpowers: the fight over so-called authentication technologies.

Far more significant than any single feature of Windows XP is the broader technological architecture it will begin to test--Microsoft's .Net My Services project, formerly known as HailStorm. The "foundation service" is designed to organize all manner of personal information, from calendars to credit card numbers, while easing such online transactions as banking and shopping.

A cornerstone of .Net My Services is an authentication key called Passport, a kind of universal identification tool. It allows people to sign in to multiple sites with the same password and store such personal information as credit card numbers for online purchases at stores that agree to use Microsoft's security technology.

"Passport represents a critical control point of the Internet of the future, the place where identity will be managed on the Internet," said David Smith, a Gartner analyst. "Identity leads to all kinds of information about people. It's the keys to the candy store."

AOL is combating Passport with a similar ID mechanism called Screen Name Service. Both companies are racing to sign up leading Web sites and companies to use their respective technologies.

Some analysts say Microsoft could benefit in this area from a hesitation among many content companies to partner with AOL Time Warner. Some companies fear the media conglomerate already has too much control of distribution and could dictate absolute terms.

"Now that AOL owns Time Warner and many properties in its various vertical genres, I think media companies are far more likely to look for an agnostic distribution partner that's not invested in vertical content," said Mark Mooradian, an analyst at research firm Jupiter Media Metrix. "Microsoft can use to its advantage the fact that AOL is in every respect a media company and downplay their own 'medianess' to position themselves much more as a technology enabler and a software company."

In some ways, the campaign to strike content partnerships brings Microsoft full circle to its strategy to secure exclusive access to popular Web sites. Five years ago, the company struck deals with Walt Disney, Viacom's Paramount Pictures, Dow Jones and other media companies for content accessible only through its Internet Explorer browser or MSN, only to back away from many of those arrangements under antitrust scrutiny.

Microsoft also retreated from many high-profile experiments with its own content, including the Sidewalk chain of city guides, the Expedia travel site and various MSN sites such as MoneyCentral.

Ironically, the move from content may end up helping Microsoft against AOL by returning the software company to its roots: the long-held philosophy of owning the underlying architecture needed to use applications, services and content, allowing the company to collect the equivalent of toll fees for access.

"Applications are Microsoft's greatest strength," Mooradian said. "When it

started getting involved in Expedia and MoneyCentral and CarPoint, it realized that."

While AOL Time Warner hopes to attract and maintain subscribers with its family of publications and other properties, Microsoft is focusing on the convenience of its technologies. Microsoft says .Net My Services and Passport can be used through any device with access to the Web, whether it be a desktop PC or a cell phone, in direct competition with the "AOL Anywhere" initiative.

"Windows XP is an end point for .Net services," said Jim Cullinan, a Microsoft spokesman. "Windows XP is the first offering that will at the base level show a twinkle of what Web services might look like in the future."

That future, as defined by Microsoft, could bode ill for AOL's ability to expand its subscriber ranks. If Microsoft links all its software and services through .Net, it could gain a significant advantage over AOL's exposure to potential new customers.

AOL walked away from negotiations to package its service's software with Windows XP this summer, maintaining that the PC desktop offers only limited opportunity to acquire new subscribers. That means AOL must rely more heavily on alternative marketing strategies such as the mass-mailing of CDs--tactics whose success is anything but guaranteed, even with the vast cross-marketing power of the Time Warner division's magazines, books, music and TV programming.

For now, Microsoft and AOL are battling one deal at a time. Each company is trying to piece together its own version of the Internet based on its authentication technology, presumably for a regular fee to subscribers.

In July, AOL invested \$100 million in Amazon.com, a deal that required the online retailer to use Screen Name as its e-wallet technology instead of Microsoft's Passport. The arrangement was considered a major coup for AOL because a partnership with the Web's largest retail company could plant a significant stake in the ground against Microsoft's advances.

The software giant has responded with its own high-profile partnership. This month, it struck a deal with Disney's ESPN.com that gives MSN exclusive rights to the sports site's content in exchange for a toolbar link on ESPN's home page to other Web services. ESPN will eventually incorporate Windows Media streaming technology and adopt Passport as one authentication option.

The arrangement is reminiscent of deals in years past that have drawn antitrust objections from competitors.

"It's nothing new for Microsoft to leverage off its monopoly into other businesses," AOL Time Warner's Buckley said. "It's at the heart of the antitrust problems they have and the core of the prosecution of Microsoft by antitrust regulators in the United States and Brussels and beyond. It's also nothing new for Microsoft to desire to play in AOL's space."

Yet AOL Time Warner faces antitrust questions of its own, a concern that Microsoft has raised repeatedly. During the federal government's review of the AOL-Time Warner merger last year, Microsoft pointed to its adversary's previous moves to keep other chat networks from working with AOL Instant Messenger.

Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates himself met William Kennard, then chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, to complain about AOL's dominance and the need for interoperability. Instant messaging will remain a major point of conflict between the two companies after the launch of Windows XP, which will offer a new version of the technology that has audio, video and text collaboration features embedded in the operating system.

Still, AOL is well aware that two can play the antitrust game, and it is more than willing to turn the tables on Microsoft. Already, sources on Capitol Hill say AOL lobbyists have begun analyzing .Net and .Net My Services for possible competitive concerns.

In addition, some in the industry believe Microsoft might face a backlash in charging subscribers, developers and Web sites for use of .Net My Services--a possibility that could tip the scales in AOL's favor.

"Microsoft is kind of breaking the rules and saying, 'We're going to charge everybody for everything,'" Howe said. "AOL's opportunity is to use a pure media business model for their services, to do a pure subscription model for other services, and not to go do the charge-everyone-for-everything pass."

Report: U.S. Privacy Plan Bad for Business

Nearly two weeks ago, Timothy Muris, chairman of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), outlined a new "ambitious, positive, pro-privacy agenda" for the United States that focused on three areas: 1) increased enforcement of existing privacy provisions; 2) new initiatives such as controlling spam and creating a national "Do Not Call" list for people to opt out of telemarketing calls; and 3) a retreat from previous moves to establish legislation to protect online privacy.

In a new brief, Forrester Research made its feelings about the FTC's new agenda clear: It "pours gasoline on the fires of the privacy debate ... a company that thinks that the FTC's backing off of legislation means that the issue will go away is sadly mistaken. Instead, addressing privacy one technology or business practice at a time only adds to the confusion."

Forrester did not hold back in its criticism of the FTC. The commission's new approach, the consulting firm said, will backfire in a number of ways.

First, instead of keeping the privacy debate limited to the Web, the new agenda will expand the debate to firms' offline practices. "By taking on telemarketing in this new agenda, the FTC has expanded the scope of the privacy debate to include existing offline practices," Forrester said.

Second, as the FTC launches its new agenda, it has failed to present an overarching framework. "This means that businesses are left out in the cold with no clear guidelines for what is acceptable," Forrester said.

Finally, Forrester concluded, the FTC's new direction will only embolden privacy advocates and, worse, will give them even more ammunition by expanding the debate to offline telemarketing. "By putting this much emphasis on privacy, the FTC has only validated the claims of watchdogs ... [and] advocates will continue to highlight companies' errant practices in their press releases and news conferences."

For companies fearful of being accused of playing fast and loose with customer information, Forrester did offer some guidelines for protecting themselves from "what easily could be a multimillion-dollar PR nightmare." This risk, coupled with the new uncertainty in policy, "makes it even more important for companies to clearly assess the risks and costs of their data practices and systematically update and enforce their privacy policies."

The Forrester brief recommended the following: Anoint a chief privacy officer. The CPO will serve as the focal point for developing systems and best practices in customer information handling. This is not to say that a company must develop a whole new level of bureaucracy to accompany the new position, Forrester said. "Successful CPOs at companies like IBM and Microsoft have leveraged existing systems and personnel."

Assess exposure. Audit and document online and offline privacy practices to create an enterprise-wide view of how data is used and shared.

Regularly review privacy policies. "Many firms have policies that were thrown up in the late 1990s and have been collecting dust since then," Forrester said. Clearly, this is not the best tack to follow.

Develop a PR action plan. Companies need to assume a worst-case scenario about possible privacy violations being made public, then plan how to address subsequent PR fallout. "The strategy should include a clear escalation process, an accurate statement on the privacy practices of the organization and an education plan for the executives involved," Forrester said.

Internet Tax Moratorium Set to Lapse Sunday

A contested federal moratorium of Internet-related taxes is set to expire on October 21st, despite recent passage of a two-year extension in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The ban, which was imposed in 1998, prevents state and local agencies from imposing any new taxes on Internet service providers (ISPs) and other e-commerce sites.

Although two different extension bills were introduced in the Senate early this month -- one calling for a two-year extension and another calling for an extension only through June 30, 2002 -- neither has yet achieved passage.

Many experts guessed that passage was thwarted before Sunday's deadline because of the anthrax scare that has effectively shut down Congressional activity over the last several days.

Jeremy Sharrard, associate analyst of online taxation for Forrester Research, told NewsFactor Network that he expects the Senate will pass some version of an extension on the ban within the next couple of weeks.

Unlike the House, "there are stronger personalities in the Senate," Sharrard told NewsFactor. "There were a couple of different plans circulated, and [the Senate] was unable to reach a consensus" in time.

But Sharrard said that the likelihood of federal, state, or local authorities attempting to pass new taxes anytime soon is remote.

According to Sharrard, two U.S. senators, Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) and Byron Dorgan (D-North Dakota) each have a strong vision of what the future Internet tax structure should be.

Wyden sponsored the bill calling for a two-year extension and for "states to simplify their sales and use taxes," while Dorgan, a former tax administrator, sponsored the bill calling for the shorter extension.

Wyden and Dorgan have debated the issue for the last one-and-a-half to two years, and Wyden told news sources that although he didn't think civilization would collapse if the moratorium were not extended right away, he contended that "starting Monday, there's an opportunity for considerable economic mischief."

Meanwhile, Dorgan told sources that he would object to Wyden's proposal for a two-year moratorium because it "doesn't address the second problem" of how to handle the Internet sales tax issue.

Although both politicians and the public often confuse the two issues, the current ban has no bearing on the issue of sales tax on e-commerce.

Presently, consumers purchasing products and services online are obligated to pay a tax to their own state even if the Web site from where they made these purchases does not have a presence in their own state. However, that law has not been uniformly enforced.

Nevertheless, the Internet tax debate has been a peculiar one because people often don't understand what they are debating, Sharrard said.

But, added Sharrard, "everything about the debate is intended to confuse." Even the title of one of the bills, Sharrard pointed out -- the "Internet Tax Freedom Act" -- leads people to believe it covers freedom from having to pay sales tax on e-commerce purchases.

But many politicians, like Senator Dorgan, would like to bundle the tax issues together because certain states, including Dorgan's home state of North Dakota, do not have income tax and depend heavily on sales tax to boost their coffers, Sharrard noted.

Code Errors Stall Spread of Computer Worms

Score two for computer users this week, zero for the cyber-criminals.

The "anthrax worm," which exploits the current, international anthrax scare in an attempt to infect e-mail, has too many errors in the code that have prevented it from spreading, several Internet security companies said.

And the SirCam worm comeback that was supposed to emerge Tuesday failed for the same reason -- its author made errors in the worm's code that prevented it from reactivating its payload as promised.

The bad news is that it appears there are more hackers, virus writers and other cyber-criminals out there than ever before. The Computer Emergency

Response Team (CERT) said Tuesday that "security incidents" worldwide are on track to double last year's tally. The numbers reflect an increase in reporting as well as security breaches.

"There are more people who are security aware -- not just as a result of the activities of September 11, but before," Lawrence Rogers of CERT told NewsFactor Network on Wednesday. "There are also more people doing things worthy of being reported."

The anthrax worm emerged Tuesday. It pretends to be a bulletin, released into Internet e-mail systems, that offers information on the disease of the same name, which has caused widespread fears across the globe in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attacks on the U.S. and the subsequent war in Afghanistan.

It is a self-propagating worm, written in Spanish, that was apparently coded in the widely available Visual Basic Script (VBS) Worm Generator, the same toolkit used to unleash the Anna Kournikova worm.

It has "Antrax info" in the subject line and carries an attachment that purports to be a photo of side effects of the disease. When the attachment is opened, the worm is released, invading a user's e-mail address book, as the Melissa worm did before it.

The anthrax worm spreads itself to all the names in the address book and also attacks the computer's hard disk by overwriting some files.

However, the script that sends it through e-mail to the Microsoft Outlook address book entries has a flaw that prevents it from proliferating.

In fact, after an initial burst of attention, several security companies are not now even listing it as a threat.

The SirCam bug surfaced in July and is still sending out worm-riddled e-mail to the Internet from infected PCs running Microsoft Windows.

That worm's originator planned it so that it would have a one in 20 chance of deleting all files on an infected computer when the date reached October 16th, which in Europe is formatted as 16/10/01. But, again, a flaw in the way the malicious code was written means the file-deleting code will never be run, said the British security firm, Sophos.

Last year, CERT officials said it received 21,756 reports of "security incidents," which it defines as "attempts, either failed or successful, to gain unauthorized access to a system or its data." It has received 34,754 this year, with 75 days left, a 60 percent increase over the entire total for last year.

If the reports continue at that pace, they will reach 46,000, more than twice last year's total.

There have also been more software vulnerabilities reported -- 1,820 this year as opposed to 1,090 for all of last year, a 66 percent increase. There have been 29 security alerts published this year as opposed to 26 last year.

A computer virus purporting to provide information about anthrax and its side effects has been discovered, computer security experts said on Tuesday.

The new computer virus, technically a worm because it is self-propagating, is spreading through e-mail instant relay chat channels on the Internet, according to Steven Sundermeier, product manager at Central Command which monitors corporate e-mail systems for viruses.

The e-mail, written in Spanish, has a subject line that says ``Anthrax Info.'' The message claims that the attachment is a photo that shows what the side effects of anthrax are.

Once the attachment is opened the worm spreads itself to everyone listed in the email address book. The worm also can overwrite certain files on remote drives, Central Command said in a statement on its Web site.

Researchers in September discovered a worm masquerading as a program to allow people to vote on whether the United States should go to war over the Sept. 11 attacks. However, the ``Vote Virus" did not become widespread.

U.S. authorities say one person has died and others in three states and Washington, D.C., have been infected by or exposed to anthrax, a bacterial disease spread by spores. The bacteria is believed to have been spread via powder in or on letters.

I Know What You Did On Your PC Last Summer

The old cracker practice of "dumpster driving" is about to take a very sophisticated and scary turn. Deleting a file on a disk is not enough to keep someone with a little patience and the right software from sampling every file you've ever saved to that disk.

While such a scenario is still remote for average users, with more and more personal data being stored in applications on home and office computers, it's a good idea nonetheless to start "shredding" files before physically discarding your floppies and hard drives.

When you save a file in the DOS/Windows universe, an entry is made to your PC's File Allocation Table (FAT) to indicate file name, size, and where the data lives. When a file is deleted, basically the entry to the FAT is removed, allowing the space allotted to that file to be available once again. It's important to note that at this point, no data is erased or overwritten.

IN FACT, Windows safeguards deleted files, which are sent to the Recycle Bin until the bin is emptied. This second chance is sometimes helpful if you delete an important file by mistake. However, even if the file is "emptied" or erased from the Recycle Bin, it is still possible to "undelete" a file. Software such as Norton Utilities can reconstruct the FAT entry and allow the file to be accessed once again.

In a perfect world, you might ask Windows to write new data over deleted old data. Even if Windows allowed this, some applications in Windows litter the hard drive with temporary or intermediate backup files. Thus, when you delete a saved file, you've deleted only the last, final copy--all the backups and temp files still remain.

But that's not all. When files are first saved, they fill in pre-set clusters. That's fine, as long as every file fits perfectly. Typically, the end of a file falls short, meaning there's a gap between the end of the file and the pre-set end of that final cluster. This gap is known as "slack space." If the end of a file happens to occur over a previously "erased" cluster, it's also possible to read some of the previously written data.

ADDITIONALLY, SAVED FILES may also contain random pieces of RAM data, called "RAM slack." If you consider how many files, saved backups, and temporary files you may have, there's a lot of slack space on, say, a typical 4GB drive, and a lot of old data hanging around.

Note that neither reformatting nor defragging the drive erases data. So even if you defrag, delete all the files at a command prompt, and then reformat your drive, in theory someone could still recover your data. For an illustration of how slack space, RAM slack, and deleted files can work against you, take a look at a software product called EnCase; it's used by legitimate forensic investigators to crack criminal cases.

FORTUNATELY, programs such as File Shredder and Eraser 5.1 can help. What these programs do is delete a file by overwriting the clusters with junk data. The Department of Defense requires at least seven overwrites. These programs allow up to 100 overwrites.

Another program, Evidence Eliminator, scrubs bits of files that don't appear in the FAT, that exist only in the slack space, and could be reassembled to reveal information about you or your company, including Web sites you visited long ago.

There also are ways to read the magnetic 1 and 0 signatures found on the physical drive itself. Some government agencies worldwide require that old disks be sanded or dissolved with acid. The retrieval of such minute signatures, however, requires very expensive, specialized equipment.

It's highly unlikely that you or I are worth the time and effort for such extreme data recovery. Then again, just as carbons and discarded documents found in dumpsters once fueled pranks in the early days of computing, carelessness with magnetic media today could come back to haunt us tomorrow. It's yet one more thing to consider when saving your credit card or password information to your hard drive.

Apple to Launch Digital Device - 'Not a Mac'

Apple Computer Inc. teased its loyal fans on Wednesday that it would debut a "breakthrough digital device" next week as aficionados buzzed that the maker of Macintosh personal computers would show off a new digital music system.

'Hint: it's not a Mac," Apple said in an invitation to the unveiling next Tuesday, two days before one of its biggest shareholders and competitor, Microsoft Corp., launches its new operating system, Windows XP, which is full of digital media capabilities.

An Apple spokeswoman declined to elaborate on plans or to comment on speculation that the PC icon would launch a music device that would work

with or be built upon its popular music jukebox program for the computer, iTunes.

Web site (<http://www.thinksecret.com>), devoted to uncovering secrets from Apple, said the device would be a "music-type recorder-player".

Apple has said the personal computer is becoming the hub of a digital lifestyle linking entertainment and other digital devices. iTunes has been a hit with Apple fans and reviewers who have praised the simplicity of the free software.

Known for design and innovation, Apple still is suffering from a slump in consumer spending that has hit the PC industry hard.

With a \$4 billion cash stockpile, executives have said the firm has room for taking some risks, such as Apple's recent move into retail sales with a line of flagship stores designed to turn a profit and win new Apple fans.

Apple stock is one of the best performers among personal computer makers this year, although it is still far below highs set last year, before the economy began to crumble, leaving Apple with a glut of unsold machines.

Yahoo Sells Ring of Community Sites

Yahoo said Monday that it has closed its sale of community network WebRing and is notifying members to transfer to a new site.

Yahoo said Monday that it has closed its sale of community network WebRing and is notifying members to transfer to a new site.

The Web portal said it sold WebRing to Tim Killeen, one of the early engineers who created the system. WebRing consists of communities of Web sites featuring related content, allowing people who share interests to reach one another. For instance, a Web site on grizzly bears would provide links to other sites with relevant information.

Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

It "was in the best interest to sell (WebRing) to Tim because it's difficult for us to sell advertising inventory on pages that are hosted on other companies' Web sites or other companies' networks," said Nicki Dugan, a spokeswoman for Yahoo.

The sale of WebRing marks Yahoo's latest effort to refocus its business on varied sources of revenue that will help it offset ad-sale losses. The company released its third-quarter earnings last week, reporting that its revenue had fallen to \$166.1 million and that it may lay off additional employees.

Yahoo said WebRing members were notified Friday that the portal would not automatically transfer WebRing information, and members must repost their sites through the new system. Dugan said the company's terms of service do not allow it to transfer member information to another service.

The company said rings and sites that are not transferred will be lost when the migration period ends, a date that has yet to be determined.

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